DEMOCRATIC
GERMAN REPORT

VOL. IV NO. 3 FEBRUARY 4th 1955 Price: 15 Pf., 5 c., 3 d

NEGOTIATE NOW!

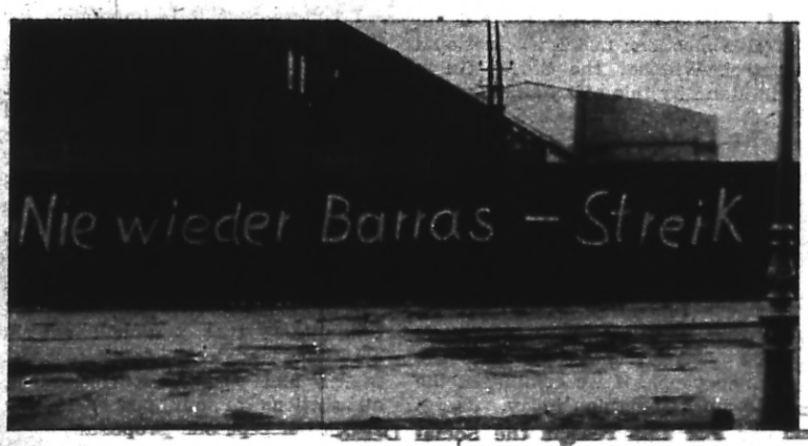
Socialists, Unions, Churches Oppose New Army

The representatives of millions of West Germans organised in the Social Democratic Party and the trade unions have joined with prominent Catholics and Protestants in calling in the past few days for immediate negotiations between the East and West on German reunification.

Social Democratic Chairman Erich Ollenhauer, in an open letter to Chancellor Adenauer, has demanded postponement of the ratification of the Paris Agreements establishing a new West German Wehrmacht (full text of the letter is given on the next page), and important trade unions have demanded a country-wide plebiscite before any further steps are taken towards remilitarisation.

The disquiet of these and other West German circles was expressed in a great meeting held in the historic Paul's Church in Frankfurt, where delegates from all sections of the West German population unanimously approved a manifesto calling for immediate East-West talks.

Strike pickets on January 22nd in front of a Ruhr factory with placard stating "strike on here"



"Never again barrack life – strike" says this slogan painted on a factory wall in Duesseldorf

Here are some of the main points from speeches made at this meeting:

Professor Alfred Weber, Social-Democratic sociologist: "What have the Russians offered in their declaration of January 15th? They have offered a reunited Germany, limited only by the fact that it should not enter military alliances on one side or the other. They have offered free elections under a form of control to which the Germans themselves should give their approval.

"This is an offer which must be accepted if there is any intention at all of negotiating."

Georg Reuter, Deputy Chairman of the West German Trade Union Federation: "Who is entitled to speak for our people on the vital question of German rearmament? This decision cannot be left in the hands of the 500 deputies of the parliament in Bonn. When general elections were held in September 1953 this question was simply not put to the electorate. Parliament should refer this question back to the people.

"Nobody can deny that the existence of two independent armies facing each other in Germany will imply a great danger

(continued on page 19)

SOCIAL DEMOCRATS PROPOSE TALKS

Erich Ollenhauer, Chairman of the West German Social Democratic Party, has urged negotiations on German unity before the ratification of the Paris Agreements and the establishment of a West German Wehrmacht.

He made the appeal in an open letter to West German Chancellor Adenauer. In view of the importance of this letter, expressing the views of the Social Democratic Party, second most powerful party in West Germany, with 162 deputies in the West German Parliament, we publish the full text below. GERMAN REPORT does not identify itself with all views expressed in this letter.

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Dear Chancellor,

The German people stand at a decisive point in post-war history. The vote in the legislative body of the Federal Republic (West Germany, ed.) on the Paris Agreements, main point of which is the raising of German forces in the framework of West European Union and NATO, is of fateful importance for the future of the entire German people. We are convinced that the acceptance of these Agreements will lead to a fateful hardening of the partitioning of Germany.

The Federal Parliament, on the other hand, has repeatedly agreed unanimously that the restoration of German unity is the most urgent task of German policy. The restoration of German unity is only possible through negotiations between the four occupation powers.

The attitude of the Soviet Union makes it clear that after the ratification it will no longer be possible to negotiate on German unity. This would mean that the Federal Republic and the "German Democratic Republic" (quotation marks in original text, ed.) will exist side by side, against the will of the German people. At the same time tension between East and West will be sharpened, and this will bear most heavily on the entire German people on this side and the other side of the Iron Curtain.

Wide sections of the German people believe that this situation makes it imperative that the Federal Republic should make every possible effort to prevent such a development, for the sake of the unity, liberty and peace of our people.

If such efforts are not made, then the misapprehension will continue to exist in foreign countries that Germany does not regard reunification in liberty as the most urgent objective.

The German problem cannot be solved by the Government of the Federal Republic alone. It can also not be solved by means of negotiations between the Federal Republic and Pankow (the Government of the German Democratic Republic, ed.). German unity will not come as the result of promises made either by the West alone, or the East alone. It can only be brought about if the powers in the West and in the East agree on unity in liberty, and take, without delay, all practical measures to put this unification into effect.

Such a policy would accord with the obligation taken by the occupation powers to work for the restoration of German unity. The Social Democratic Party of Germany is convinced that all possibilities have not yet been exhausted to make a serious attempt to restore German unity in liberty through Four Power negotiations, before the Paris Agreements have been ratified.

The declaration made by the Soviet Government on January 15th 1955 contains proposals about the elections to be held in all four zones of Germany and in Berlin which make the prospects for negotiations on this point more hopeful than during the Berlin Conference in January 1954. In addition the Soviet Union agreed in its declaration for the first time to the idea of international control of the elections.

The Soviet Union thus now claims that it is prepared for the holding of free elections under international control. Whether the Soviet Union will stand by this offer, and whether agreement can be reached with the Soviet Union on an electoral law which would be free in our sense cannot be judged in advance, but can only be clarified in the course of negotiations.

The Soviet Union must now be taken at its word. In 1952 it was neglected to test the seriousness of the offer made by the Soviet Union. We could not answer for it to the German people if we committed the same sin of omission today.

For this reason the Social Democratic Party of Germany addresses to you, Mr Chancellor, the urgent request to take the following steps immediately:

1. To request the Governments of the USA, Great Britain and France to negotiate with the Government of the Soviet Union on the proposals made in the declaration of the Soviet Government dated January 15th 1955.

2. To couple this request to the governments with the wish that such negotiations should be begun before the ratification of the Paris Agreements.

The Social Democratic Party of Germany has been led to make this request solely by the wish to utilise every opportunity to unite the entire German people, in the four occupation zones and in Berlin, in a free and democratic state.

If this attempt is successful, then also the eighteen million Germans who are waiting behind the Iron Curtain will be able to live as men in freedom and lawfulness. A great part of the worry about the freedom and peace of the world would be lifted from us, and not only from the German people.

Mr Chancellor, you know as well as I do that the millions of our people are constantly increasing who watch with growing uneasiness the continuation of the partitioning of Germany. The German people will never accept this partitioning. Millions of people are filled with horror at the prospect that rearmament will deepen personal conflicts of conscience and political divisions inside the Federal Republic.

I believe that it is impossible for the Federal Republic of Germany to take the path of rearmament at a time when such deep divisions exist amongst our people. The defence and the security of a country must be based upon a community of will of the people. This can only be attained if at this critical hour we give priority to the serious attempt to restore the unity of our nation.

These feelings and considerations are the basis for our proposals, and I am sure that you will act in accordance with the most earnest wishes and deepest convictions of all sections of our people if you accept our proposal.

Erich Ollenhauer.

(cont. from front page)

NEGOTIATE NOW!

to our people, and to all other peaceable peoples."

Dr Johannes Hessen, Catholic Professor at Cologne University: "As a Catholic theologian I am extremely sorry that my brothers in Christ in the Federal Republic, with only a few exceptions, support the 'policy of strength', instead of supporting a policy of service to peace. The policy of 'integration' of West Germany can only lead to the creation of military blocks, which have the very slimmest chance of preserving peace."

Ernst Langer, Protestant clergyman from Gelnhausen: "I do not know our number, but I know that we are many, and that we come from all quarters. We have amongst us workers and students, young people, trade unionists, and representatives of different political parties and the church. Many of us bear on their bodies the scars of the last war. That is why we raise our voices now to say 'no' to the Paris Agreements and remilitarisation. We have no time to lose — perhaps tomorrow it will already be too late to reunify Germany. We do not believe that anyone has the right to force us to take up weapons again, only ten years after the last war.

"We are convinced that our country can make a big contribution to the relaxation of international tension by urging negotiation on the reunification of our own country.

Dr Gustav Heinemann, former Christian Democratic West German Minister of the Interior: "The citizen is not an object of the will of parliament, but has sovereignty over parliament. Rejection of the Paris Agreements will of course lead to a crisis, but we believe that this crisis is a lesser evil than the catastrophe which will arise if the partitioning of Germany is made permanent. West German rearmament cannot possibly lead to German reunification and a peaceful development of Europe."

Erich Ollenhauer, Chairman of the West German Social Democratic Party: "We come from many different parties and sections, but we are united by our longing for the reunification of our nation. For us the restoration of German unity represents the most urgent goal of our policy, but this must never be achieved by means of force and of aggressive nationalism. Before a final decision is taken a real effort must be made to negotiate on the reunification of a free and democratic Germany and its integration in a system of collective security in the framework of the United Nations."

ONE MILLION STRIKE

On January 22nd, nearly one million West German coal and steel workers went out on a 24 hour protest strike. Immediate cause of the strike was an insulting attack on the trade unions by an industrialist, but all observers assessed the strike as a warning action against the consequences of remilitarisation.

MIDDLE-CLASS OPPOSE

Leading members of middle-class parties in West Germany have called for negotiations with the Soviet Union before ratification of the Paris Agreements. They included Willy Rademacher, district chairman of the Free Democratic Party in Hamburg, who telegraphed Adenauer on January 21st urging negotiations.

Hamburg women and children carry placards saying "We oppose recruitment" and "My daddy should not be a soldier"

"Apprenticeships, not vacancies for soldiers: Houses, not barracks" says this placard carried in a demonstration in Frankfurt/Main

TEN YEARS AGO

By Ralph Parker

Ten years ago the allied armies of liberation were fighting their way into nazi Germany. On their course they were liberating Hitler's concentration camps and his liquidation camps. Here is what Ralph Parker, famed British journalist, saw in the nazi death factory at Majdanek, near Lublin in Poland, after it had been liberated by the Soviet Army:

Let me tell you what I remember most clearly of that July day 10 years ago.

All about the boots. Hundreds of thousands of boots piled up in a building as big as an aeroplane hangar. Overflowing through the doors to spill for yards over the dusty field. Old galoshes, felt slippers that came off tired feet, smart boudoir slippers with dyed feathers on them, the shabby boots of the ghetto and shapely shoes of lasts kept with the customer's name on them — no footwear was too worn out or too eccentric to be thrown away by the meticulous store-keepers of Majdanek to whom nothing was valueless except human life.

It was this nightmare character of impeccably managed massacre and robbery, of an accurately audited bookkeeping of death on the seven-figure scale that I remember with most clarity — and with most loathing. You have to strip a great many people to be able to fill the whole side of a room with worn broken-arch supports; you have to wrench the teeth out of very many jaws to collect as much gold as I saw the receipts for in the office of the SS and Polizeifuehrer in Lublin; you have to kill many men and women to make a collection of several thousand artificial limbs.

And what I saw, remember, was only what the great store in an unfinished cinema in Chopin Street had left over when the Russian and Polish liberators arrived.

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I have on my desk an accurately typed letter on wellprinted notepaper written on Sept. 23, 1942, to the German SS chief at Lublin by the Commander of the Lublin security forces. I removed it from the files in the Chopin Street store.

It requests the SS chief to supply him with a number of very ordinary articles of daily use from the stores of the annihilation camp, "these objects being no longer available in the shops or from my head office."

Room after room in the store was filled with such objects, all of wich were second-hand, in other words removed from the suitcases that new arrivals at Majdanek were invited to leave "for safe keeping" when they passed into the harmless looking "bathhouses" just inside the gates.

I saw thousands of old shaving brushes, shelves of pocket mirrors, of watch-dials bearing the names of every watchmaker I have ever heard of, an incongrous collection of Mickey Mouse toys and, perhaps most pathetic of all, a roomful of cracked enamel children's pots.

Here and there a name — Sara Leyser of Duesseldorf, Ernst Weils, Prague composer of a violin sonata picked up among a pile of manuscripts; a Polish woman Amelia Strylowsgi, born in 1873; a Greek called Zuruni, a teacher of the Commercial College at Piraeus; Maurice Javaneau, farm servant of Tours, France, born in 1924; Henrik Visser of Laandam, Holland.

These are some of those who were butchered at Majdanek and who left no trace save a scribble on a fly-leaf or a laundrymark on a garment disposed of by the Gestapo.

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But there are other names that I noted at Majdanek and which may be more easily traceable. The names of German firms who contributed to building the place. Tesch & Stabenow of Messberghof, Hamburg, for instance, the manufacturers of Zyklon B, the pale blue crystals that used to be sprinkled on the dark concrete floors of the "bathhouses." The rooms were 17 square yards in area and there were six of them at Majdanek. When 2,000 naked men and women were packed into them the temperature soon rose to the height required to dissolve the crystals. After that it took from 2 to 10 minutes for people to die. The dead did not fall, the rooms were too closely packed.

Or Auerts of Berlin who designed and manufactured the little peepholes like those in some cafes, through which the guards watched to see how the process of "bathing" was proceeding. Or Dinas, the manufacturers, and engineer Teloner, the designer of the stoves used for disposing the corpses brought from the "baths."

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A "first-rate" job, those incinerators. No wonder the makers proudly put their name over the small iron doors into the furnaces (six corpses in each, seven if you chop the legs off). For some time the incinerator department was the bottle neck at Majdanek. The lust to kill generally outpaced the capacity to burn.

Even towards the end, when the supplies of victims were running low, there were hitches on the conveyor of death. I saw quite a number of bodies that had got past the stone slab where gold-filled teeth were yanked out and legs chopped off at the knee but which had not yet been placed on the iron stretcher to be shoved into the furnace.

All the same, it must be admitted that the Ruhr manufacturer who handled the job did it pretty well. He put in electric fans to supercharge the heat in the furnaces. They burned nonstop. They were still warm when I felt them.

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The work of monsters? Undoubtedly. Yet when I sat facing those monsters a few hours after I left Majdanek camp and saw them in the uniform of the German army and its auxiliary police services they looked — well, like many of those whose pictures you see in west German newspapers and magazines today — and not only in German ones.

Herman Vogel of Mulhausen, with the greying hair and gentle smile. Did he consider himself a good German patriot? Yes. A good Catholic? Oh yes. Did he know that the 18 wagonloads of children's clothes he had sent to Berlin in two months were murdered children's clothes? Yes, but he was obeying orders.

He was not the only one who gave that answer when faced with the evidence of the murder of a million people, the victims of German reactionaries' desire to subdue Europe.

The voice of that million whose dust was scattered from the Majdanek hill-top is silent in the chorus of protest against west German rearmament. But the haggard-faced, swollen-limbed survivor of Majdanek whose first act after liberation was to write: "Look and Remember", on the gates of the camp expresses all that the dead of Majdanek and other scenes of Nazi German savagery would say to us today.

Teachers and Re-nazification

THE TALE OF HANS HEINEMANN

By Peggy Aprahamian

A former police officer of Hitler's Storm Troops has recently become a teacher in a little town in the British Zone of Germany. No objection was raised to his appointment, because a denazification court had classed him as a "nominal Nazi" — somewhat surprising in the holder of such a position!

But there is a further charge against Hans Heinemann — that of crimes against humanity. It may well be that the court which ultimately tries him on this charge will acquit him of any responsibility for the crimes, but he has not been acquitted yet.

Moulding Minds

It is a measure of the eagerness of the Adenauer Government to rehabilitate the Nazis that Heinemann has been put in charge of moulding children's minds before he is even brought to trial.

Do you remember that most terrible of visual aids, the news-reel records of the liberated concentration camps of Europe? We saw them in our cinemas at the end of the war. Some teachers in the forces saw them in reality. Whichever it was, you will remember with horror and loathing. We did not like looking at the bones of the dead actors in those films. We hardly recognised those who played the living roles as men and women. The shots of the store rooms piled up with the shoes of dead children burned into our hearts. And when the records were completed we discovered that six million people had died in these places. Crimes against humanity. Was this where Hans Heinemann trained to be a teacher?

Small-scale Killer

Perhaps this man is an exception, or a small-scale murderer, since he comes up so late on the trials list. That cannot be said of Field-Marshal Kesselring and his jack-booted, swastika'd veterans. It cannot be said of ex-General Kurt Meyer, convicted murderer of Canadian prisoners of war. This man was given the death sentence, but it was commuted to life imprisonment and recently cancelled altogether.

His release was greeted by thousands of hysterical citizens when he returned to his home town. They presented him with a cake and a car. He was given an executive position in the local brewery, promised a full pension as a retired general and handed a lump sum as compensation for imprisonment.

It is not a question of small fry or big fry. West Germany is a land where Nazi tinkers, tailors, soldiers, sailors are coming back, where Hitler songs are being sung at social gatherings of uniformed goose-steppers. A land occupied by the armed forces of nations whose people bled to make an end of the Nazis.

If this is not enough, educationists here may be interested in the forty-two professors. These learned German scholars were so outspokenly fascist in Hitler's time that they have never been re-employed. But they are not peddling boot-laces to keep body and soul together. West Germany pays them a full salary during their enforced idleness. Last year they grew dissatisfied and put in for an increase.

Insolence

Their insolence is not so surprising if you remember that the younger generation of Germans is being taught by men like Heinemann from history books that laud the Nazi record.

They are making films with Luftwaffe pilots as heroes. There is a children's school timetable on sale in Hanover headed by a vivid drawing of Nazi soldiers manning a field post.

All this is nothing compared with the audacity that will express itself if the Nine-Power proposals to rearm the Germans become a reality. Obscure Hans Heinemann will be multiplied in the schools. Kesselring and Meyer will help to staff a fully equipped and official army. Krupp will be given leave to manufacture arms again and the third world war will be a more imminent danger.

Our representatives in Parliament last November voted in favour of the remilitarisation of Germany, with only six brave exceptions. A week later Sir Winston Churchill topped his eightieth year with the public revelation that he had, in 1945, ordered Naze guns to be made ready for possible use against the Red Army by Nazi troops.

That vote in Parliament was not the voice of the British people. Our Government dare not hold a plebiscite on German rearmament because it knows that millions would register emphatic protest.

Do Not Forget

The authentic voice of Britain is heard wherever men and women get together to discuss this question. We do not forget those news-reel pictures, we do not forget the bombed schools and the memory of the 7,623 children killed. Neither do the West German people forget the price of German militarism. Last October at their trade union conference they voted 387 to 4 against the London Plan to rearm their country.

We understand that a rearmed Western Germany hardens the divisions of Europe, and already the Prime Minister of East Germany has declared that a national army capable of defending the German Democratic Republic will become necessary in such an event.

Teachers For Peace

This is a new year, 1955. It is likely to be the year of the General Election. But even before that opportunity arises we can make our will effective. As teachers we have certain channels of expression which it is our responsibility to use. Teacher M.P.s and the educational press can be bombarded with our opinions.

Teachers for Peace, in a petition organised at short notice, was able to present to teacher M.P.s over 700 teacher signatures against German rearmament. On February 19-20 this organisation will be holding a joint conference with Science for Peace on "Next Steps Towards the Achievement of Peace".

(From "Education Today", London)

IN EAST GERMANY WORKERS GO TO UNIVERSITY

By Joan Becker

Visitors from abroad often ask what the workers' and peasants' faculties in the German Democratic Republic are, who studies in them and what they learn there. These are not actually faculties of the universities, but matriculation faculties where older students who left school at 15 can bring their general knowledge up to university standard.

Young men and women who want to study in a workers' and peasants' faculty — so called because children of workers and peasants get first chance — must be 19 years old and have served a full apprenticeship in some branch of work. Most candidates are proposed by their factories or places of work, but they can of course apply independently.

Applicants have to fill in a questionnaire, write a short autobiography and furnish certificates and testimonials. If these are in order, the candidate is invited to a written and oral examination.

Exams

The written examination consists of an essay and some mathematical problems and the examination commission then decides in the oral examination whether the candidate's general knowledge and capacity to learn are equal to the admitted strain of reaching university standard in the three years' course. The examinations are held every year in summer and courses begin in September.

I know a young woman, now in her second year of medical school at the Martin Luther University in Halle, who qualfied in this way, like thousands of other young people who are studying in the various universities in our Republic. Martha is a carpenters' daughter, whose parents came from Silesia at the end of the war and started life anew in Halle.

She had only an ordinary primary school education, followed by a course in steno-typing and bookkeeping, and she was working as secretary in the government medical service when she decided at the age of twenty-six that she would like to become a doctor herself. So she applied to enter the workers' and peasants' faculty, and on account of her good general knowledge she was permitted to start in the second year of the three years' course.

She got the usual basic stipend of 180 marks a month, and later an additional 40 marks for good work. Exceptionally brilliant students get 80 marks additional stipend.

No Money Worries

This is of course not nearly as much as she had been earning, but it relieved her of all immediate financial worry and put her in an incomparably better position than that of students in West Germany, for instance, who have no chance to reach university standard except through high school or through special coaching, which costs a great deal of money, and where it is admitted that about 80 per cent of actual university students do not have enough money to live on.

Mr. Terence Prittie, writing in the Manchester Guardian of September 25th 1954, notes that: "According to the latest figures (for West Germany) only 12 per cent of students have over 150 marks a month from grants and from their families. Over 40 per cent have under 100 marks, and 22 per cent under 50 marks. Somehow they must earn in order to study. It is therefore no surprise to find that nearly 60,000 work throughout their four months' vacation. Two-thirds of these take odd jobs — and even regular employment — during term-time . . ."

Hostel Shortage

There are still not enough students' hostels for students of the Martin Luther university, and many students live at home, with relatives or in lodgings, so that those whose homes are further away can have the available hostel accomodation, where they pay 70 marks a month for full board and lodging. This leaves even those who only get the basic stipend with 110 marks for themselves. The older hostels are very simple, with four-bed, three-bed and a few two-bed rooms, but the newly-built ones are much nicer and more home-like.

In the Faculty itself students are divided into study groups of between 25 and 30 students with a group tutor, and teaching hours are about the same as in the high schools — six periods of three quarters of an hour each, from 8 am. to 3 pm. The subjects are also the same; German, Russian, Mathematics, History, Physics, Chemistry and Biology, but of course the work is more concentrated, as much more material has to be worked over than regular high school students get through in their four year course. Many students are very much behind in some subjects, as they have been a long time out of school and any special study which they have done in the meantime has been in one or two subjects in which they were most interested.

Sports, extra classes for backward students and special study circles in microscopy, chemistry and the like fill up the afternoons. Books and teaching materials are all provided free of charge, and since the new buidings were opened in 1953, classrooms, laboratories and libraries are up-to-date, bright and airy.

Oral Tests

Written and oral tests are given at intervals during the three years and a yearly examination each summer. At the end of the first year, students are re-grouped according to their future plans. There are three departments in the Faculty at the Martin Luther university — a languages and history department, a medicine and biology department and a mathematics and natural science department, and students concentrate on their special subjects for the remaining two years. Students taking up languages or history learn English and Latin as well as Russian, for example, and those intending to study medicine learn Latin too.

As Martha was allowed to skip the first general year, she went straight into a group in the medicine and biology department, matriculating after two years. She had to work very hard and keep her nose to the grindstone, but when she entered medical school she found that she had a very good grasp of the essential subjects — physics, chemistry and biology.

During their three years' course students visit big factories like the

Leuna and Buna works, from which many of them come, and probably cannot resist showing off a bit before their former work-mates. They go on other trips, too. One popular annual excursion is to Weimar, to visit the Goethe and Schiller Museums, and the National Theatre in Weimar always put on a special performance of Goethe's Faust for them.

Out-of-school activities are mostly organized by the Free German Youth movement. Week-end walking tours, visits to theatre and cinema and so on are planned to complement school work. There are also several cultural groups, an amateur theatrical and a folk song and dance group, a recitation circle and a big choir with a professional conductor which tours all over the Republic.

Martha was at a big Free German Youth summer camp outside Dessau on the Elbe river during the 1952 summer holidays, and when she went to the Harz mountain ski camp in the winter of 1953 she had only to pay the reduced students' train fare; everything else was free.

Concentration Camp Survivors Fight on

German, French, Polish, Soviet and other survivors of nazi concentration camps situated in that part of Germany which now forms the German Democratic Republic will rally at their old camps in April this year to celebrate the 10th anniversary of their liberation and to pledge their continued fight against German fascism and militarism.

More than 2000 resistance fighters from France will travel to the site of Buchenwald Concentration camp on April 11th, the liberation anniversary, and more than 1000 women from many countries who survived imprisonment in the Ravensbrueck Concentration Camp for women will rally there on April 30th.

Fascist Murderer Makes Film of Victim

The West German "Arca" Film Company is planning to produce a film of the life and death of Walter Rathenau, German Foreign Minister after the first world war, who was murdered by fascist thugs.

Ernst von Salomon, one of the men who murdered Rathenau, is expected to write the script for the film.

Fascists Wreck Social Democrats' Office

Fascist rowdies broke into and wrecked the district offices of the Social Democratic Party and the trade unions in Luebeck, West Germany, on January 23rd.

SOVIET UNION ENDS STATE OF WAR WITH GERMANY

The Soviet Government officially announced on January 25th that the legal "state of war" still existing between the Soviet Union and Germany had been ended.

The official Soviet announcement stated that this step had been taken in the interests of the people of both East and West Germany. The ending of the state of war does not affect international obligations entered into by the Soviet Union, and rights and duties arising from agreements between the four occupation powers on the treatment of Germany as a whole.

The Soviet announcement was greeted in both East and West Germany as another step towards the establishment of normal relations. The Soviet Union already maintains normal diplomatic relations with the German Democratic Republic, and announced on January 15th that it was ready to establish normal relations with West Germany.

West German Resistance

The trade union provincial conference in Rheinland-Pfalz decided on January 23rd almost unanimously to press for a plebiscite on the question of remilitarisation. A similar demand had been made one week earlier by the provincial trade unions in Bavaria. In other parts of West Germany the demand has been supported by individual trade unions, such as the chemical and paper workers in Bremen, and the metal workers in Remscheid.

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Shop stewards of all factories in the Ruhr town of Velbert signed a telegram sent to the West German Government on January 26th threatening "fighting measures" if the Paris Agreements were ratified.

* * *

On January 20th the Social Democratic and Communist fractions of the town council of Ueberau, Hesse, rejected the Paris Agreements and protested particularly against the requisitioning of land which remilitarisation would entail.

"Democracy and German militarism cannot be reconciled" stated Max Woenner, Chairman of the Bavarian Trade Unions, speaking on the Bavarian radio on January 26th. Replying to crities who had attacked the Bavarian unions for "meddling in politics" by opposing remilitarisation, Woenner said: "The fate of our people is in the balance, and we have to act, just as everyone has to act who cares for the future of Germany."

East Germany Publishes "Black Book"

The East German "Committee for German Unity" has published a black book analysing the Paris Agreements and what West German remilitarisation would mean for Europea.

An English translation of the main chapters of the book is now in active preparation.

WIN A NEW READER

Fill in the name and address of a friend, work-mate or acquaintance on the form below, and send it to

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We shall be pleased to mail sample copies of the paper to him or her.

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BERLIN NOTEBOOK

By John Peet

In recent months between 8000 and 10,000 people monthly have moved from West Germany to East Germany. I had intended to write in Berlin Notebook this week about these people: who they are, and what made them take this step.

Then I found, in the East German weekly "Wochenpost", an article by writer Margot Pfannstiel describing the scene in the waiting room in East Berlin where some of these West-East emigrants come, seeking the possibility of making a new life. So I am handing over the Notebook this week to Margot Pfannstiel to describe what she saw and learned in this waiting room:

Eva Setschor is married, and used to live in Strausberg in East Germany. Then she had a row with her husband and left him. "I did not know where else to go so I went to West Berlin" she says, but there seems to have been a taste for adventure mixed up in the decision.

In West Berlin she was sent to the Marienfelde Refugee Camp and was screened. Then an American official told her she had been recognised as a political refugee and she was transferred to another camp. "It was terrible here — full of real criminals" she says. "It was quite clear why they had fled. I didn't know that I should do, I hadn't expected it to be like this. I asked for a chance to work, and was offered the job of dish-washing in Sweden or the job of taxi-dancer in Munich.

"They told me that if I went back here I would be sent to prison. But I don't care, I wanted to come back."

Of course she will not be sent to prison. "I want to go and work on the land, in nature, where there are decent people" she says, and her wish has been fulfilled.

* * *

A young woman is sitting at the table holding a child on her lap. Her name is Kaethe Kuhrt, and she used to live in East Berlin. Her husband is a confectioner, and earned good wages. But in March last year they went to West Berlin, attracted by the neon lights and the glossy goods in the shopwindows. In the refugee camp in West Berlin Frau Kuhrt bore her third child. "It was frightful" she says, "six people in a room, bad food . . ."

In June the family was flown out to Hanover. They lived first in another camp, and then in the little village of Niederwambach. There was no work, and nobody wanted to have anything to do with the refugees.

"I was never able to afford butter or sausage for us and the children" says Frau Kuhrt. "We wanted to come back to the East, but we could not raise the money for the fare. Then finally my husband got a job as a labourer. We went without butter to save the fare money. When we got to East Berlin again both of us and the children cried".

Frau Kuhrt will get an apartment in East Berlin, and her husband will be able to go back to his old job.

* * *

Sitting next to Frau Kuhrt is a young man with broad padded shoulders. His name is Otto Scharoch, and he is an adventurer. One year ago he arrived from West Germany and asked for asylum. He was given work and a place to live. But he did not want to work, and returned to the West again. Now he has arrived again, asking for asylum once more. He will be turned down by the reception commission because there is no place in the German Democratic Republic for adventurers and people who do not want to work.

* * *

In the arm chair in the waiting room is sitting Kurt Albrecht, 49-year-old tailor's cutter from Fulda in West Germany. He has been out of work for many years. His wife is expecting a baby. So he packed his bag and promised his wife "I won't come back until I have a job." He travelled first to Stuttgart, in West Germany. Here he could find work, but nowhere to live, since he could not possibly raise 3000 marks key money before moving into an apartment.

Four nights long he slept in station waiting rooms, and then hitch-hiked his way to Hamburg. "I had not got a penny left, and had to sell the extra shirt I had with me" he says. Then by chance he picked up a copy of the "Hamburger Volkszeitung", a newspaper of the West German Communist Party. He thumbed hopelessly through the "Situations Vacant" column, and then began to read an article about the German Democratic Republic. "There is no unemployment in the German Democratic Republic" he read.

He was scared of his own idea, but then he hitchhiked his way to West Berlin on a lorry. He walked across the sector boundary and asked a People's Policeman where he should go to. The policeman gave him the address of the reception centre, and pressed 20 pfennigs into his hand to pay his tram fare. "I nearly fell down for astonishment" says Herr Albrecht.

There is plenty of work for Herr Albrecht in East Germany, and he will soon be able to bring his wife and children from West Germany.

* * *

Christel Burmester is 19 years old, and her grandfather from West Berlin has brought her to the reception commission. Christel has had an unhappy youth, her step-parents did not want her and put her in a home. Christel was apprenticed as a mechanic in East Berlin, and began to make her way in life.

Then she got to know a young man from West Berlin. They got engaged, and she moved to West Berlin too. When she got a baby, the young man left her without a penny. She did not know what to do, but her grandfather, who also lives in West Berlin, had a clear head, and brought her back to East Berlin. "You can work here, and above all proper care will be taken of the kid" he says. "In the West you will never get anywhere, but here they will look after you".

Democratic GERMAN REPORT

Subscription rates: 4 marks, 8/- sterling, $ 1.25 per annum or pro rata, postage paid.

Subscriptions may be paid at the following addresses:

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Britain: Collet's Subscription Depot, 40 Great Russel St., London W. C. 1

All other communications should be addressed to:

**Democratic German Report,
Friedrichstrasse 167 III,
Berlin W 8,
Germany.**

Edited and published fortnightly by John Peet. Democratic German Report, Friedrichstrasse 167/III Berlin W 8. Telephone 22 62 68. Printed in Germany by (36). Veröffentlicht unter Lizenz-Nr. 694 beim Presseamt des Ministerpräsidenten der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik